DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 051 112 SP 004 987

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TITLE Reducing Freshmen Attrition and Preparing Teachers for the Disadvantaged.
INSTITUTION Wisconsin State Univ., Oshkosh.
PUB DATE 70
NOTE 31p.; 1971 AACTE Distinguished Achievement Award entry

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Disadvantaged Youth, Internship Programs, Paraprofessional School Personnel, *Preservice Education, Self Concept, *Seminars, Student Attitudes, *Teacher Education, *Underachievers

ABSTRACT

This project, supported by federal, state, and local funds for 3 years, was designed to reduce the attrition of underachieving students; to develop positive attitudes toward self, others, school, and society; to increase enthusiasm and interest for teaching as a profession; and to develop interest and understanding for teaching the disadvantaged. One of the key components was the Personal Development Seminar, designed to help students understand themselves and the university and to increase their potential for success. Approximately 900 freshmen participate in the seminars each semester, with 35-40 professors. In earlier research with about 40 students experiencing academic difficulty, the pilot groups greatly improved their academic records. When matched with three other groups not in the project, they earned twice as many A's and B's and half as many D's and F's as their counterparts during a one-semester period, and their attitudes seemed to become increasingly positive. Utilizing experience gained from the project, the School of Education is experimenting with the seminar for each of the 1800 freshmen enrolled in the Orientation to Public Education course. A university academic success committee has been established, a 2-week, three-credit workshop is held in August for incoming probationary students, and a student cooperative learning center has been established by some of the original project students. (Author/MBM)

ED051112

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

1971 Distinguished Achievement Award Entry

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REDUCING FRESHMEN ATTRITION AND PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

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PART 1

SUMMARY

REDUCING FRESHMEN ATTRITION AND PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

Three years of Federal, State, and local support to a School of Education project designed to reduce attrition of underachieving students and to improve student attitudes toward college has ended but the impact upon WSU-O and other Wisconsin colleges has begun to be felt.

One of the key components of the successful research undertaking was the Personal Development Seminar, designed to help students -- usually freshmen -- better understand themselves and the university, and to increase their potential for success. Each semester of this year, approximately 900 freshmen in the School of Education will participate in such seminars staffed by professors assigned to the required course, Orientation to Public Education, and by other volunteer professors. The 35 to 40 professors involved are committing time to this project in addition to heavy teaching or administrative loads, because of their interest in finding better ways to help freshmen succeed academically and because of their interest in building positive attitudes on the part of incoming university students.

In earlier research with about 40 students experiencing academic difficulty, the pilot groups greatly improved their academic records. When matched with three other groups not involved in the project, they were found to have earned twice as many A's and B's, and twice as few D's and F's as their counterparts during a one-semester period. Their attitudes toward the university professors and school work seemed to become increasingly positive. Project staff members over the three year period and numerous professors, administrators, and legislators have been enthusiastic about the potential of this project for reducing student attrition and building positive student attitudes on university campuses.

Utilizing experiences gained from the funded project, the School of Education is experimenting with the personal development seminar for each of the 1800 freshmen students enrolled this year in the Orientation to Public Education course. Other local outcomes have been seen in the establishment and work of a university academic success committee, the operation of a two-week three-credit workshop in August for incoming probationary students and the establishment of a student cooperative learning center by some of the original "project" students. The personal development seminar has stimulated a four college consortium in Wisconsin which has been federally funded for the past year, with proposal already submitted to expand significantly.

PART II

EXPLANATION AND ANALYSIS

REDUCING FRESHMEN ATTRITION AND PREPARING TEACHERS FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

The following description portrays the beginnings of a federally funded project and its growth and "pay-offs" as various components of the project are assimilated into teacher education.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Reduce attrition
2. Develop positive attitudes toward self, others, school, and society.
3. Increase enthusiasm and interest for teaching as a profession.
4. Develop interest and understanding for teaching the disadvantaged.

DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Planning Year 1967-68

Beginning with the planning year, two thousand four hundred and seventeen (2,417) students were contacted. They had been either placed on probation or had dropped out of college during their first year. Two hundred fifty five (255) attended meetings, answered questionnaires, and provided data for analysis of the underachiever. This group did not appear different from any random grouping of two hundred fifty freshmen at Wisconsin State University - Oshkosh, but academic experiences in college had been poor and attitudes toward higher education and themselves were negative.

Faculty committees produced a new curriculum innovative and frequently inter-disciplinary in approach. New courses were developed which were more relevant to the needs of todays' students and society.

Personal Development Seminars

Participants were scheduled for seminars conducted by professional educators. Specific objectives of the seminars were:

1. Personal and academic advisement.
2. Orientation to the available student clinics and services of the University.
3. Testing and analysis of student difficulties so that the student might better understand his weaknesses and strengths.
4. The development of study habits, skills, and schoolsmanship.
5. Small group counseling.
6. Opening communications between faculty and students; making the student's experience in classes more meaningful.
7. Social activities.
8. To become more articulate and develop leadership confidence in group activities.

Films, video tapes, audio tapes, guest speakers and other supplementary materials were used. Major emphasis was placed upon the disadvantaged Negro, Wisconsin Indian, and migrant workers (of Mexican-Puerto Rican origin). Additional investigation was given the situation of inner-core and ghetto persons in Milwaukee and Chicago.

The Personal Development Seminar has now been expanded on the WSU-O campus to include all beginning education students, which number approximately 1800 during the 1970-71 school year.

Experience gleaned from the Personal Development Seminar has been employed for a two week, three credit, pre-session workshop for all probationary freshmen prior to schools' beginning in the fall.

Three other Wisconsin Colleges became interested in the personal development seminar and have now joined with WSU-O in the formation

of a consortium, (ARC), federally funded, bringing the seminar approach to attrition reduction and attitude change to many more college students.

A proposal has been submitted at this time for a continuation and expansion of the "Attrition Reduction Consortium" to carry the seminar to many more college students on many more college campuses with the hope that thousands of college students may realize the same types of success as the initial forty pilot students in the project Teachers for the Disadvantaged.

Counseling Sessions

Group counseling sessions were conducted by professional counselors with a major objective being to provide for each student a clearer perception of self and acceptance of self and the world about him.

Learning Centers

A central learning center was established providing supplementary study materials from the students course work in the form of sample tests, outlines, project materials and video and audio tapes made by his professors.

Instructional materials and equipment were supplied to establish centers in Art, Music, and Science.

These study materials are now made available to students in the personal development seminars.

Paraprofessional Work Experiences

More than sixty percent of the students needed to work in order to stay in college. School-related jobs were encouraged for all program participants and included video tape and audio visual technician, teacher aide in Head Start project, learning center worker, library assistant, and classroom aide.

Pilot Years 1968-70

The pilot period saw further development of program components and increase in student participants. A full staff was employed, larger quarters provided, and the program generally expanded, though only 12 students were in the original pilot group, over two hundred were involved at the close of the pilot years. Records of student growth in academic success were kept and during one semester a carefully designed matching situation was developed to provide evaluation data.

An adjunct to the entire program was planned social activities. Program students, their professors, program personnel, and other guests were invited. This gave students an informal opportunity to get to know educators as people and open more fully channels of communication between student and teacher.

PERSONNEL

The following personnel were provided during the pilot years: Director, Co-Director, Media Coordinator, Seminar Leaders, Counselors; various faculty released part-time for curriculum development; consultants, materials development personnel, and secretarial assistance.

BUDGET

The U. S. Office of Education contributed approximately $120,000 over a two year period. This was matched by $140,000 of local contribution and a $60,000 special contribution by the Board of Regents of Wisconsin State Universities. Federal funds were used primarily for staff in planning and

coordinating the first two years of the project. Local contributions and state funds represented faculty time in curriculum development, payments for student paraprofessional experiences, and instructional hardware and software for learning centers.

At this time the personal development seminars on the Oshkosh campus are being carried out entirely with no outside funding and reach approximately 1800 students annually.

Success with the personal development seminar has been such that the consortium of Lakeland, Marion, and Milton colleges together with the School of Education at WSU-O has been federally funded to develop a model for other campuses.

CONTRIBUTION TO IMPROVEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION

1. Ways were discovered to help the student with academic difficulty become more successful.

2. Student attitudes were changed toward course work, professors, fellow students, and self.

3. Through this project, potential was seen for improving the effectiveness of all teachers for working with the disadvantaged.

4. Ways were discovered to bring direct experiences into the early years of college through paraprofessional experience and curricular change.

5. The project developed faculty enthusiasm for students as individuals, curricular change, instructional innovation, and utilization of contemporary media.

6. The project developed curriculum relevant to the needs of today's college students and to the needs of the teachers for tomorrow.

7. The personal development seminar has been expanded to provide attitude change and success for greater numbers of potential drop-out students among all freshmen planning to teach. If major project results carry over to the expanded program, significant changes in the committment to teaching the disadvantaged should occur.

EVALUATION

Long range follow-up will be necessary to determine realization of primary objectives, that is, the successful preparation of teachers of the disadvantaged from those identified as drop-outs or potential drop-outs.

Project students achieved higher grades after participation in the project activities.

Project students realized a higher increase in overall grade point when compared to a randomly selected and matched group of non-project students in each of three schools of the University -- Education, Letters and Science, and Business Administration.

Specifically the project group earned twice as many A and B grades, and had twice as few D and F grades.

More project students continued in school than non-project students from the original population.

Project students made better personal adjustment, gained in confidence, increased study skills, and realized a better relationship with their instructors as measured by inventories, faculty observation, and student testimony.

A new interdisciplinary curriculum was designed with greater relevance to children, classrooms, and methodology for today's education student during the beginning years of preparation.

Over fifty faculty members from academic and professional disciplines were directly engaged in, or related to curriculum development -- course revision on the basis of behavioral objectives, interdisciplinary approaches, production of resources for student learning centers, incorporation of direct experiences into the curriculum, and innovative instructional techniques.

Utilizing experiences gained from the funded project, the School of Education is experimenting with the personal development seminar as a part of the curriculum for all beginning education students. Approximately 40 faculty members voluntarily conduct the seminars as a part of the course Orientation to Public Education.

The project has stimulated the development of a university wide academic success committee, the operation of a workshop in August for probationary students, and the establishment of a student cooperative learning center, federally funded based upon a proposal written by some of the former "project" students.

A four college consortium has been established among four Wisconsin colleges based upon the personal development seminar. A proposal has been submitted at this time to enlarge the consortium's scope providing the experiences with success and interest in teaching the disadvantaged to greater numbers of students.

Supporting Document C

HIGH ATTRITION OF UNIVERSITY UNDERACHIEVERS AND LOW TEACHER INTEREST IN WORKING WITH THE DISADVANTAGED -- A PARADOX?

By
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and
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October, 1969

Two major problems facing higher education and teacher education today are being studied at Wisconsin State University-Oshkosh in connection with a U. S. Office of Education grant and support from the Board of Regents of Wisconsin State Universities. One of the problems is the high attrition rate among college freshmen -- particularly in public institutions of higher education. The shortage of competent teachers interested in working with disadvantaged children and youth is the other.

It has always seemed paradoxical that on the one hand universities "wash out" freshmen as though there was an unlimited supply of human talent and on the other hand lament the shortage of teachers particularly interested in working with the disadvantaged. If one reflects for a moment upon this nation's record of waste and abuse of waters, forests, minerals and air, it is perhaps understandable that for years higher education has been using crude, wide screens for the purpose of selecting only the "worthy" to remain in college. It is rather understandable but sad retribution that most of those teachers who have survived the myriad of somewhat unreliable, impersonal, and sometimes irrelevant academic hurdles have little empathy for the disadvantaged pupils in their classrooms. They do their utmost to avoid them, their schools, their neighborhoods and their cities and rural areas. It is in this context that the idea of studying the two major problems was conceived. Why not attempt to recruit for teacher education from the large group of freshmen who are on probation or who have attriculated for academic reasons? Then, provide an empathic faculty for this group; give them the individual help necessary to be successful in college; and, provide an imaginative,

appropriately paced, relevant curriculum -- a curriculum designed to make them fully certifiable, effective, empathic teachers of the disadvantaged as well as the advantaged. One long range hypothesis of the study was that teachers produced from this group of students and through this uniquely designed curriculum will be inclined to select and remain in teaching positions where they will work with the disadvantaged. Any testing of this hypothesis will require a number of years of operation of the curriculum. It was hoped that many of the curricular innovations developed for this project would have relevance to the needs of all the teacher education students resulting in a greater proportion of the present Wisconsin State University-Oshkosh teacher supply planning to teach the disadvantaged. Certain developments will hopefully have an impact upon the instructional program for all students in the University.

Planning Year 1967-1968

One purpose of the planning year was to study the student population which the project hoped to tap. Another was to identify the characteristics of the population likely to be interested in the project. A third was to develop curriculum components of the project for piloting during the second year.

Student Population

During the planning year, 1967-68, students experiencing academic difficulty were contacted from among the entering freshmen classes of September 1966 and February and September, 1967. One thousand, five hundred and fifty-three students were identified originally as having either entered the university on probation; entered in good standing but been placed on probation after the first or second semester; attriculated after the first semester; or, attriculated after the second semester. Later, 864 students (freshmen entering in September 1967 and in good standing) who were placed on probation after the first semester were added to the pool. A total of 2,417 students were sent letters informing them of the proposed

teacher education program. A total of 486, or about 20%, of the students experiencing academic difficulty, expressed interest. Of this group 255, or slightly over half, attended meetings concerning the program, completed questionnaires, and in one way or another expressed continuing interest during the 1967-68 year.

Analysis of the Student Population

Assuming the 255 typified the students most likely to be recruited into a program any time it was initiated, a fairly detailed analysis of this group was made. University records and a questionnaire completed by them revealed the following:

1. All had been admitted to WSU-O under standards set by the Board of Regents.
2. An almost equal number of men and women responded.
3. One hundred and fifty-six students, or 61%, in this group needed to earn half or more than half of their expenses.
4. College bound percentiles on the A.C.T., available for 231 of the students, ranged from 99 to 1 with 54 ranking above the national median of 68. Twenty-two were in the eightieth and ninetieth percentiles.
5. One hundred and twenty-three ranked above the fiftieth percentile in their graduating class.
6. Problems identified by students as contributing to their lack of achievement included: inability to organize, poor study habits, low interest level, inability to understand professor, lack of help from instructors, inability to comprehend subject material, poor high school preparation, poor reading ability, carrying too heavy a load, difficulty in adjusting to college, difficulty in concentrating, dorm life and inability to express thoughts. Poor study habits and low interest level were the problems most frequently identified.
7. One hundred students had earned 36 credits or more.
8. I. Q. scores available ranged from 135 to 82.
9. The Factor Score Profile on the Stern's College Characteristic Index for the group of 206 students who attended one of the recruitment meetings in December reflects their perceptions of this university environment. The pattern is somewhat similar to those of university affiliated liberat arts schools, teachers colleges and schools of business administration, characterized as below average in intellectually-oriented activities and as having a high level of collegiate play and peer cultural amusements. Stern suggests that a generalized non-academic or extracurricular culture may be common to most large and complex education institutions.

Thus the nature of the group identified, as far as typical ability measures are concerned, did not appear to be markedly different from any random grouping of 250 freshmen at Wisconsin State University-Oshkosh.

Curriculum for the Study

One of the major tasks during the planning year was to design a curriculum to 1) provide specific help for students having academic difficulty, and 2) prepare teachers (and paraprofessionals) with empathy for, and competence in working with, disadvantaged children and youth.

Several assumptions about the curriculum were made prior to the planning year. First, it was assumed that, though the curriculum would probably take longer to complete than the typical four-year program, it would not necessarily be less rigorous or less encompassing than the present curriculum. Second, the curriculum would be patterned after the existing elementary teacher preparation program although attempts would be made to prepare some teachers to work with junior and even senior high school disadvantaged youth. Third, the curriculum would be designed to accommodate incoming freshmen who can be recruited because of their interest in the disadvantaged and/or because they present a poor prognosis for success, as well as those freshmen who have not been successful. Fourth, most aspects of the curriculum would contain innovative attempts at individualizing instruction, making course content relevant to the concerns of the student and the needs of the prospective teacher, and providing important direct experiences with children, youth, and society.

A university-wide faculty committee, representing various academic disciplines, was appointed by the President to assist the project staff on curriculum development. This committee was to serve as the representative core, from which expanding involvement of faculty members in curriculum innovation could take place, and throuch which a sounding board for innovative developments could be provided. Reduced teaching loads or committee assignments, Board of Regents' funds for curriculum study, and grant funds for consultants all aided in bringing expertise to the study.

Length of Curriculum

For the student entering as a freshman, the program would require five years plus three summer sessions. For the student entering following the completion of some portion of the freshman year, the program would require four years and two or three summer sessions. Additional length of time would facilitate student semester loads of from 12 to 14 credits (average is presently 16-18) and a summer session load of from three to six credits (average is presently eight). The obvious question about length of program and related financial cost to the student was partially answered by the provision of a paid internship (approx. half salary) during the first half of the fifth year and a paid residency (approx. 3/4 salary) during the second half of the fifth year. Other financial benefits were planned through waiving of fees and certain costs during the initial summer session and possibly other summer sessions. Work opportunities and certain loan or scholarship plans would also provide financial compensations.

The curriculum planned totaled 137 credits (128 presently required for graduation) including over 60 hours of general education, 36 hours of professional education, and a minor concentration of almost 40 hours in selected courses deemed to be particularly important for a teacher of the disadvantaged. According to a letter from the Assistant State Superintendent of Public Instruction in charge of Teacher Education, "-- the program outlined appears to contain all of the rigor and academic respectability contained in the standard teacher education programs provided at Oshkosh which have been approved for years by the Department of Public Instruction."

New Course Developments

Twelve credits of the general education requirement in the social sciences -- formerly consisting of four discrete 3-credit courses in American history, introductory sociology, and cultural geography -- and two credits of elementary school social studies methods were organized into an interdisciplinary course entitled

"Poverty in American Society." This 14 credit social science semester would hopefully provide a close relationship between content and method and encourage relevance of general education in social science to the problems of today's society. Faculty members from geography, sociology, anthropology, history, political science, and social science education were deeply involved in the planning. Many direct experiences such as field trips, part-time jobs in poverty areas, and microteaching were planned to supplement lecture and discussion sessions.

An intensive 12-credit art-music semester replacing six separate 2-credit courses in art or music fundamentals, appreciation and methodology was planned. A unique spiral curriculum approach was built into the art-music semester as a result of an analysis of the behaviorial objectives identified for elementary school children and university students preparing to teach them. Three four-credit laboratory courses in Physical Science, Biological Science and Earth Science were scheduled into the same semester along with the two-credit (two lecture or discussion hours plus one laboratory hour) science methods course to provide for general education relevance to the needs of university students preparing to teach in the elementary school.

Other curriculum innovations planned by faculty from various disciplines included: 1) a three-semester experimental English Composition and Speech Fundamentals sequence with a spiral approach to reading, writing, speaking, listening, and "built-in" relationships to the available clinics (writing, speech, reading) and to a language arts learning center; 2) a summer session program where the courses Conservation of Natural Resources and Wisconsin History (required by State statute) will be studied in conjunction with travel throughout Wisconsin and paid work experiences with disadvantaged children and youth (from the campus operated "head start" or "upward bound" projects); 3) providing for meaningful relationships and common direct experiences between two or three courses presently handled separately; e.g., Health Education and Physical Education Methods, Human Growth

and Development and the Psychology of Learning, three sociology courses, introduction to exceptional children and introduction to speech correction and mental hygiene.

Central Project Components

Three rather unique and central curriculum components were developed to aid the student experiencing academic difficulty and to encourage positive student attitudes toward teaching the disadvantaged and toward teacher education. These were personal development seminars, learning centers, and paid paraprofessional work experiences.

Personal Development Seminars. -- Central to the experimental curriculum is the personal development seminar. The seminar was scheduled to meet one, two or three hours per week (depending upon the particular semester or year) and would be required each summer session and semester during which students were in college. It would carry no credit in some semesters. It could be used as substitute credit for a required freshman orientation to public education course. During one semester the emphasis might be upon group dynamics with credit to be earned in this area. For at least the first summer session and first semester, the seminar would include a group counseling session conducted by faculty members from the University Counseling Center or the Counselor Education Department. Each group would include from 7 to 15 students. The major objective of the group counseling would be to effect in each participant a more realistic perception of self and of the world around him resulting in more realistic decisions and choices.

The personal development seminar has additional objectives to those for which group counseling sessions are scheduled to achieve. Students would be introduced to, and provided orientation in, the various clinics, centers, and facilities designed to aid students to be successful in college. Emphasis would be placed upon development of study habits and skills and other forms of "schoolsmanship." Special testing, student analysis and personal and academic advisement would be

planned. Through the personal development seminar attempts would be made to keep channels of communication open between students and their professors and to develop an esprit de corps among students in the experimental program and faculty members working with them.

Learning Centers. -- Another central idea in the project was that of developing learning centers in every major curriculum division -- social science, sciences, humanities, and language arts. The centers would contain materials -- purchased or developed locally -- that could provide review, reinforcement or remediation for any student at any particular time and in connection with any specific course as needed. The major activity of the subcommittees of the University-Wide Committee during the planning year was to 1) pinpoint and delineate areas of greatest student difficulty in required courses, and 2) identify and list materials, activities and experiences that could be developed or purchased for the learning centers. The most appropriate video and audio technical developments would be employed in the learning centers and competent faculty guidance would be provided in each center to ensure coordination between needs of the student in a specific course at a particular time and the materials or experiences available. It should be noted that as new courses and curriculum experiences are developed, the appropriate learning center would house those auto instructional supplements to instruction that professors might desire.

Paid Paraprofessional Work Experience. -- A third central idea in the project was that of providing early skill training in some school-related area where the student can then be employed and paid for his services. It was reasoned that developing skill as a video-tape or audio-visual technician in the classroom, or a teacher aide in the "head start" project, or a worker in one of the learning centers, or one of many other teacher, classroom and pupil-related activities would give the student a rather immediate sense of accomplishment and usefulness in the

teaching profession. It would serve to assist those students who must earn part of their expenses and provide a paraprofessional preparation for those students who do not complete the program but might still be interested in a position in the teaching profession. As various direct experience components of the project would be developed, a wide variety of paid work experiences with the disadvantaged would be available. Some of these opportunities would be provided while the student is living and studying in an area of rural or urban poverty.

Pilot Year 1968-1969

Summer 1968

One of the plans developed during the 1967-68 year was to pilot various components of the project as early as possible to determine their effectiveness and to make modifications as deemed appropriate. Some pilot work was done with 12 students during the 1968 summer session in the personal development seminar, learning center, and paid paraprofessional work experience areas. The 12 pilot students were those of the planning year population who had planned to enroll in the summer session and were willing to aid in the pilot activities. Results in terms of attitude changes and improved academic work were observed. The average of cumulative grade point averages* for the 12 students in the pilot group prior to the summer session was 1.60. The average grade point average for the 12 students in summer session was 2.58. In the evaluation of summer activities both students and staff noted positive attitude changes toward study, school, teachers and teaching the disadvantaged.

Academic Year

Course development begun in the planning year proceeded towards various stages of completion during the pilot year 1968-69 but no course was piloted.

*Grade point averages at WSU-O are calculated on a 4 point scale where 4.00 equals an "A" average.

Fairly extensive pilot activities with approximately 50 students were conducted in those project components designed specifically to aid in academic achievement.

Student Population. -- Forty-six students were enrolled in project pilot activities for the first semester. All were experiencing academic difficulties in at least one area (a high percentage in all areas) when enrolled. Composite scores on the A.C.T. ranged from 01 to 95 percentile, the average being slightly below the national mean. Approximately 45% of the pilot group ranked in the upper half of their high school graduating class. About 60% of the group was enrolled in elementary education, approximately 24% in secondary; one student was in special education, one in the school of business, and three were undecided as to major.

Personal Development Seminar Pilot Activity. -- Four groups of 10 to 13 students each met for one hour, twice a week with a member of the project staff. Objectives were to help students understand themselves, build positive self-images, set goals, develop skills, and keep channels of communication open between faculty and students. During the first semester an emphasis was placed on study skills and orientation to campus resources. During the second semester students were exposed, through films and guest speakers, to the problems of disadvantaged and minority groups. A program utilizing specially designed tape recorders to improve written composition was implemented during the first semester. Those students using the program received grades of C or better in English.

Students met in groups of 6-8 with a pair of professionally trained counselors for one hour a week. These group counseling pilot sessions were conducted to implement for each student those dimensions of the personal development seminar objective relating to building positive self-images and realistic perceptions of self and the world about him.

Learning Center Pilot Activity. -- Although still in its infancy, a learning center was established and many activities and materials of a review, remedial, and reinforcement nature were made available to project students. Resources included video-tapes prepared by WSU-O professors, reference materials, workbooks, audio-tapes, portable tape recorders, auto-instructional materials, and programmed materials. Academic tutoring in all disciplines was made available, and the learning center was staffed one evening a week primarily to serve project students who had acute need for remedial assistance in written communication.

Paid Paraprofessional Work Experience Pilot Activity. -- This component was offered to project students on a voluntary basis. The program was to provide the students with an opportunity to earn money, develop skills related to teaching, have meaningful educational experiences and, perhaps most important of all, give the students a successful and rewarding experience to somewhat compensate for the defeatist attitude held so often by those who have experienced academic difficulty. A student worked between 8 and 10 hours per week at the rate of $1.40 per hour. Thirty-five of the project students participated in the paid paraprofessional work experiences component. Work assignments were made on the basis of student interest, job availability and relevancy to education. Work stations were, for the most part, located in the Campus Laboratory School in classrooms (kindergarten through junior high school); the head start program; the library; and the office. Other stations included the University and School of Education video-tape and audio-visual centers and the Computer Center. An analysis of the duties performed and the frequency of duties performed revealed that teacher-related duties were those performed most frequently by most students. Most of the students involved did, in fact, have experiences and did develop skills relevant to teaching.

Results

The combination of factors employed in the project appeared to have some significance in the pilot students' being more academically successful than before, and more successful than comparable groups of students from any of the schools of this University not involved in the project. Since the year's activity was of a pilot nature rather than that of a full operation of the project, it was difficult to maintain significant statistics for one group over a two semester period. The most detailed analysis, therefore, was that made of the group recruited in September and intact throughout the first semester of 1968-69. An analysis of the grade results for semester I of 39 project students -- each carrying an average of 12.5 credits plus the project activities -- revealed the following data:

1. Eight students received eleven A's involving 25 credits of course work.
2. Twenty-six students received forty B's involving 109 credits of course work.
3. Thirty-eight of the 39 students received at least one "C" grade. These 38 students received 90 C's involving 253 credits of course work.
4. Only 5 students received a grade of "F", or a total of 7 "F" grades involving 22 credits of course work.
5. Twenty-two students made a 2.0 or better Grade Point Average (G.P.A.):

G.P.A. 1st Sem. 68-69	No. of Students	Range of Previous Cumulative G.P.A. of Each Class of Students	
		Highest	Lowest
3.0 and above	2	1.8	1.5
2.5 and above	(a) 8	2.2	1.5
2.2 and above	(b) 17	2.2	1.4
2.0 and above	(c) 22	2.2	1.2

(a) Six of these students have never before achieved a 2.0 G.P.A.
(b) Thirteen of these students have never before achieved a 2.0 G.P.A.
(c) Eighteen of these students have never before achieved a 2.0 G.P.A.

6. Twenty-six students raised their cumulative G.P.A. as a result of this past semester's work. The average G.P.A. raise was .28 and the average difference between this semester's G.P.A. and the previous cumulative G.P.A. was .63. Five students achieved a G.P.A. for the past semester which was one full letter grade above their previous cumulative average.
7. There were several rather dramatic individual cases of improved grade

point averages. Some of these are listed below for illustrative purposes.

	Previous Cumulative G.P.A.	G.P.A. for 1st Semester, 1968-69
Student A	.80	1.85
Student B	1.44	2.45
Student C	1.51	3.40
Student D	1.80	3.06
Student E	1.39	2.41
Student F	1.72	2.50
Student G	1.23	2.16
Student H	1.62	2.42
Student I	1.55	2.23
Student J	1.26	2.00

8. Fifteen students in the pilot group ended the first semester with a cumulative G.P.A. of 2.0 or better. Prior to this semester only seven students had achieved a cumulative G.P.A. of 2.0.
9. The average of G.P.A. for the group for the first semester was 1.91. The average cumulative G.P.A. for the group just prior to first semester was 1.71. The average cumulative G.P.A. for the group after the first semester was 1.86.

Comparisons with Non-Project Students. -- A comparative grade analysis -- 1st semester 1968-69 -- was made of project versus non-project students. A random sample of non-project students was drawn from the School of Business, School of Education, and School of Letters and Science. Subjects for the non-project samples were controlled on the following variables: credits earned, cumulative grade point average, and credits attempted first semester 1968-69. Education and Letters and Science samples were also controlled on sex. (Lack of girls in the School of Business prohibited control of this variable for the Business sample.) All non-project students were: (a) enrolled as full time students (12 or more credits); (b) on academic probation at start of semester; (c) in the same "credits earned" classification as the project group. Project and non-project groups were essentially similar in terms of high school rank, A.C.T. composite score, previous college achievement, and courses attempted last semester.

The analysis of first semester grade reports of project and non-project students revealed differences all of which favored the project group. The project

group achieved an appreciably higher G.P.A. than each of the non-project samples. Similarly, project students received many more A and B grades and significantly fewer D and F grades. More specifically, the project students recorded 28% of their grades in the A or B category, while their counterparts in business, letters and science, and education recorded 10%, 17%, and 16% (A or B grades) respectively. On the other end of the grade scale, differences again favor the project group. Project students received 20% D or F grades, while the business students received 56%, and the education and letters and science students received 33% and 35% respectively.

Project students were allowed to remain in college regardless of their grade point average. This privilege was not afforded the students in the randomly selected comparison groups. Therefore no realistic comparisons could be continued during the second semester of 1968-69. However, the cumulative grade point average at the end of the second semester for those first semester project students who remained with the project during the second semester rose from 1.69 to 1.92. This represents a gain of .23 for the year. Furthermore the second semester group earned a one semester grade point average of 2.07 for an average of 13.5 credits attempted. This compares favorably to the 2.14 grade point average they earned in the first semester when carrying an average of 12.5 credits.

Information obtained through pilot activities suggested that variables other than high school rank, College G.P.A., and A.C.T. scores were equally important for project students in determining academic success. Of 22 students who received a 2.0 G.P.A., or better, well over 50% were in the bottom half of the A.C.T. national norm group and nearly 50% were in the bottom half of the high school graduating class. Of the 17 students who made below a 2.0 G.P.A., approximately 25% were in the upper half of the A.C.T. national norm group and nearly 50% were in the upper half of their high school class. These data certainly suggest further investigation into the relationship between A.C.T. scores, high school rank, and college G.P.A. for students expecting the kind of program developed at WSU-O.

Pilot Student Attitude Changes. -- Generally, the attitudes of pilot students toward higher education, professors, and academic pursuits seemed to be more positive and supportive after substantial involvement in the project than before. These changes have been observed by each of the staff members working with the students and by university administrators. Pilot students have volunteered testimony to recruit additional students and have completed attitude inventories, written letters or given oral testimony (some are recorded) of their attitude changes.

One attitude inventory developed by project students following a pilot period brought complete or near complete agreement to such statements as:

1. I feel more individualistic
2. I feel much happier towards school now.
3. I now have the feeling that teachers have an interest in students and a concern for whether or not they pass.
4. I enjoy many more things and accept things easier.
5. I now have a definite goal in life.
6. Because of the help of the program I don't feel like "just another student" any more.
7. I feel that faculty members and administrators have a sincere interest in the students who are in the program.
8. I feel very concerned for what happens to other students in the program.
9. I want to learn more from and about the teachers than before.
10. As a result of being in the project, I have found that I want to teach more, because I found that I really like to work with people.
11. I never had much feeling for faculty members before, but now I feel that many of them are concerned about us as people as well as students.

Several students, of their own volition, wrote letters or papers on their reactions to the project components. One student paper summarized as follows:

> "This Project gave me something else besides a decent G.P.A. The Project gave me the self-confidence that I did not have when I came to college. It also gave me a certain pride. Not only did I want to do well for myself, but also my success would reflect on the other members of the Project."

Utilizing Project Findings

The project was originally designed to move from pilot activity into a five-year state-supported operative stage with a minimum of 100 students and with control groups organized for research purposes. During the second year it became apparent that funding for such an undertaking was uncertain. Therefore, decisions were made to assimilate as many as possible of the project components into the main stream of the teacher education and university programs.

Summer Session 1969

A total of 96 students participated in project activities during the 1969 summer session. Seventeen of the 1968-69 pilot group continued in the project. Fifty-eight university students experiencing academic difficulty were recruited. Twenty-one entering freshmen were recruited on the basis of low A.C.T. scores (below 17) and low placement in their high school graduating classes (low quarter).

Experimental sections of freshmen composition and general psychology were offered. Course content was made more relevant to the needs and concerns of students and major changes were effected in instructional techniques and in faculty-student-project staff relationships. Instructors, students and project staff were agreed that the experimental sections represented an improvement over more typical approaches in these subjects. As a result departments offering the experimental sections were encouraged to plan curricular research involving regular and experimental sections.

Personal development seminars, learning center activities, the skill development and paid work experience components were conducted with similar success to that experienced in previous semesters. In other words, students met with more academic success than previously, and attitudes toward college and teaching the disadvantaged were judged by staff members to have become more positive. For example, two thirds of the qualifiers -- freshmen who would not normally be accepted in the fall unless they received a 1.50 grade point during the preceeding summer

session carrying 6 credits of work -- clearly qualified for fall entrance. The usual percentage of "qualifiers" actually qualifying for fall entrance is only 50 per cent.

The College Descriptive Inventory (CDI)[1] is a semantic differential attitude scale designed to identify degrees of positive or negative attitude on the part of college students towards certain aspects of the college environment. The CDI was used during the summer session of 1969 at Wisconsin State University-Oshkosh as a means of determining the extent to which certain attitudes of students in the Project changed. The scales were administered to 59 subjects on a pre-test and post-test basis.

Since the purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which the students' attitudes toward the constructs changed during the eight week period of the pre- and post-tests, the scores of the two tests on each individual were abtracted, producing a positive or negative discrepancy score indicating the extent to which each person's attitude changed, for better or for worse. The total discrepancy scores for the whole group were then computed.

Average gain or loss in attitude scores for each construct was not calculated, since it was apparent that even in the case of those constructs which showed the greatest discrepancy between pre-test and post-test, the average score change would work out to a negligible change in attitude. Because mean gain or loss scores were not computed, it was not considered possible to attempt any measurements of statistical significance. However, because the total group attitude improved on some constructs, and because there were great differences between the constructs in total positive or negative scores, it was felt that this Inventory does seem to be suggestive of the general changes in attitude that took place during the eight week period. Gains in attitude scores occurred in categories re-

1. This inventory was locally developed by Wm. O'Donnell, of the Testing Center of Wisconsin State University-Oshkosh, and has not been published.

lated to reading, college courses, professors, study and school work generally, while the negative discrepancy scores appeared in non-academic areas such as Viet Nam, beer bars, social life and residence halls.

Since the total funding of the project operation by the State of Wisconsin as a research undertaking was not possible or imminent, the summer served to initiate the process of assimilating project components into the main stream of the teacher education program. Two new staff were added to those already experienced in conducting personal development seminars; additional staff members were recruited into conducting group counseling sessions; additional equipment and materials were added to the learning center as were new dimensions of skill development and paid work experiences. Two of the project staff were hired out of the regular university executive budget to work in the elementary education advisement offices and one project staff member was hired to work in the secondary education advisement office for the 1969-70 academic year. In addition to the normal responsibilities these positions would entail specific charge was given to find ways of assimilating project components relating to student academic success into the regular teacher education program.

The curriculum development aspects of the project were placed in the hands of appropriate department chairmen, deans and vice presidents with the request that every effort be made to implement -- on at least an experimental basis -- the curriculum changes suggested and in some cases carefully delineated. At least six departments have indicated a desire and willingness to attempt such assimilation into the regular curriculum during the 1969-70 academic year.

SUMMARY

Two years of intensive planning and piloting activity have not solved the problem of high attrition among university underachievers. The low interest among teachers in working with the disadvantaged continues. It is of some consolation, however, that at the institution where this planning and piloting were conducted, there are hopeful signs of progress. Faculty and students are aware of the problems. Students are, in fact, important and faculty are increasing their attentiveness to student problems. Curriculum examination, revision and development have received an important shot of adrenalin. Various vehicles for transferring pilot activities into the regular university operation have been developed. A University-wide committee on academic success has been established and has met with project staff to explore means by which components can be made available to larger numbers of students. Increasing numbers of faculty and administrators view the project as one of the more positive attempts to reduce student unrest on the campus. Finally, the teacher education program is being vigorously studied and proposals for its sharp modification are underway to the end that more and better teachers for all of the nation's children and youth will be produced as the freshmen attrition among prospective teachers is reduced.